

A

REGULAR METHOD

OF GOVERNING A

FAMILY:

OR BRINGING UP

CHILDREN and SERVANTS

IN THE

SERVICE OF GOD.

RECOMMENDED

To the serious Consideration and conscientious Practice of the HEADS and GOVERNORS of FAMILIES.

By the AUTHOR of

The Way of Living in a Method and by Rule.

The SIXTH EDITION.

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Regular Method, &c.

JOSHUA XXIV. 15. last Part.

*as for me, and my House, we
will serve the LORD.*

THESE are the Words of Joshua,
the immediate Successor of Moses,
the Government of the Children
Israel; and he shews himself in
these Words, like a very wise and
good Governor, to be as much concerned

for the true Religion and Virtue of
 People, as for their outward Peace and
 Prosperity : For he called the Heads
 of their Tribes and Families together, and
 in a great and solemn Assembly set be-
 fore them the many great and wonder-
 ful Things which God had done for them,
 and the mighty Obligations which lay
 upon them to serve him : And he pro-
 pounds to them the Covenant which they
 had solemnly made with the Lord
 their God ; and asks them, whether
 they continued still of the same Mind,
 and were still resolved to be faithful to
 that Covenant, or intended to revolt and
 fall off from it, and to serve other Gods,
 and bids them, by way of Reproach for
 their many Revolts and Backslidings,
 choose which they pleased ; but assures
 them, for their Example and Encourage-
 ment, that he would take a particular
 Care, not only of himself, but of his
 Family too, and oblige them to serve
 the Lord.

*But as for me and my House, we will
 serve the LORD.*

Governing a Family.

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In speaking to these Words, I shall do
these following Things:

I. I shall shew you wherein the Ser-
vice of God doth consist.

II. I shall press upon you the Obliga-
tion which lies upon all Heads and
Governors of Families, to promote
this Service amongst their Children
and Servants.

III. I shall prescribe you a Method
for the more effectual promoting
this Service in your Families.

IV. and Lastly, I shall set before you
the many great Advantages which
will follow from such a Care of the
Service of God.

I. I shall shew you wherein the Ser-
vice of God does consist.

God is the great Creator and Go-
vernor of the World, and ought to be
served by his Creatures according to
those Rules which he has given them,
and upon those Principles which he has
propounded to them; for if we would
have our Service of God accepted by
him, we must serve him in the Way
which he himself has appointed: No

other Service will recommend us to him now he has made known to us by the Light of Reason, and the farther Revelation of himself in the holy Scriptures, what he requires of us, upon what Principles we must do it, and for whose Sake he will accept of it. And I think in these three Things the Service of God does consist,

1. In a hearty Belief of the Principles of Religion.

2. In a conscientious Practice of the Duties of it.

3. In an humble Dependence upon Christ's Satisfaction and Intercession, for the Divine Acceptance of our Faith and Obedience.

1. The Service of God consists in a hearty Belief of the Principles of Religion. By the Principles of Religion, I mean those great and necessary Truths which God has revealed in the holy Scriptures, or made known by the Light of Reason, as they are summed up in the several Creeds recommended to us by the Catholick Church. And all these ought to be heartily believed by

Governing a Family.

us; for the divine Understanding is the supreme Rule and Measure of our Understandings, and we ought to submit them entirely to whatever God has any ways declared to us: And we have his infinite Knowledge, Truth, and Goodness, for the Security of our Faith, that we cannot be deceived in our Belief of him: For as a God of infinite Knowledge and Wisdom cannot be deceived himself, so a God of infinite Truth and Goodness cannot deceive others. And the Truths which God has made known to us, are the greatest and noblest Truths in all the World; for they teach us what He himself is in his Nature and Perfections, and in his Works of Creation, Providence, and Redemption: And they shew us what we were in our State of Innocence, what we are in our State of Sin, or Grace, and in some measure what we shall be in our State of Glory or Misery. And they are not only the greatest and noblest Truths in themselves, but they are also of the vastest Importance, and the nearest Concernment to us; for if they be heartily believed, and duly considered by us, they

A Regular Method of

are so many powerful Motives and mighty Helps to the due regulating our Will and Affections, and the well-governing our Lives and Actions; and will by degrees, bring us into an entire Conformity to the Will of God in the inward Frame and Temper of our Souls and the outward Tenor and Course of our Conversations. Here we must lay the Foundation of our Obedience to God: This must be the Beginning of our Service of him. We must get right Apprehensions of God and ourselves because a right Faith is the direct Way which leads to a holy Life: And an erroneous Belief does naturally tend to carry us into a wrong Practice. And therefore if we would serve God aright we must settle in our Hearts a firm Belief of all those great Truths which he has made known to the World by the Light of Nature and Revelation of Scripture, and conveyed to us by his Church in her Creeds, as a short Summary of that Faith which is there delivered; for such a Faith will not only powerfully engage us to obey and serve God, but also plainly direct us how to do it upon the best Principles, and

the chiefest Ends; because if we
it have its due Effect upon us, it
will inspire us with the Love of God,
and the Hopes of Heaven, which are
the best Principles, and make us aim at
the Glory of God, and the Salvation of
ourselves and others, which are the
chiefest Ends of all our Obedience.

2. The Service of God consists in a
conscientious Practice of the Duties of
Religion. By the Duties of Religion,
we understand all those Things which
God does require of us by his Will
in any ways made known to us: For what-
ever God commands us, becomes a
Duty to us: because he is by many
Titles the supreme Lord of us, and has
a plain and absolute Right to be obeyed
by us. And we should be very consci-
entious in our Obedience, and obey
him from a true Sense of Duty, and
not upon any carnal Respects or world-
ly Motives; for his Command is the
Ground of our Obedience, and should
be the Reason of it: And this would
bring us to an universal Obedience, to
obey him in all his Commands, be-
cause there is the same Obligation for
it; for he that commands in some,

commands us in all the rest. And we think ourselves bound to obey him in one, why not in another? there not the same Reason for it? For does not he who commands the one command the other also? There must then be no picking and choosing in the Duties of Religion, no doing what we like, and leaving the rest undone: But we must make a Conscience of every Duty, and not knowingly neglect any one: For God will not be put off with partial Obedience, with an Obedience in some Things, and a Neglect of others; but he expects to be obeyed by us in every Thing according to the best of our Knowledge and Power. There must be an Uniformity in our Actions, and our Lives must be all of a piece, if we would be accepted by him. Nothing less than this will recommend us to him; for St. *James* expressly tells us Chap. xi. 10. "that whosoever offends," (that is, knowingly offends, for in the very next Chapter he tells us, "that in many things we offend all") I say, he tells us, that "whosoever thus offends in one Point of the Law, is guilty of all." And he gives this Reason for it in the

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And next Verse, that every Part of it is bound upon us by the same Authority, and leaves us no more at liberty to transgress one than another. I heartily wish this were more considered in the World than we plainly see it is : for how many Persons are there, who appear to be very careful of some of the divine Commands, and as careless of others ? But what do they mean by this ? Do they think to compound with God, and to bribe him in some Things, to give them a Liberty in others : But as the wise Son of *Sirach* has long since observed to us, *Ecclus.* x. 20. " God never gives any Man a License to sin." And yet how greatly is this Liberty taken in the World, even by Persons who seem to be very conscientious in some Things ? I might give many Instances of it ; but I shall only name one, and that a very common one ; It is the Neglect of the blessed Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. For is there any Command in the whole Bible more plain than those Words, *Luke xxii. 19.* " Do this in Remembrance of me ?" But as plain as it is, how many are there amongst us who pretend to be very scrupulous in other

Matters, and at the same Time make no Scruple of living Year after Year in the Breach of this great Commandment? cannot stay now to argue this with them, but I would have them and all others consider in Time the great Partiality of their Obedience, and think seriously with themselves, what Answer they will be able to give their great Judge at the last Day, when he shall summon them before him to give an Account of their Obedience, not to some only, but to all his Laws. And this I dare affirm, would be an effectual Means to make them more conscientious in the Performance of every Thing which God has commanded them; for if they did in good earnest consider that they must one Day most certainly be called to an Account how they have discharged every Duty, they could not still go on in the Neglect of some Duties, as plain and great as any of the rest.

3. The Service of God consists in an humble Dependence upon Christ's Satisfaction, and Intercession for the divine Acceptance of our Faith and Obedience. If we be never so hearty in our Belief of the Principles of Religion, and
never

never so conscientious in our Practice of the Duty of it, there will be so much Weakness in our Faith, and so many Failures in our Obedience, that we must not trust to them for God's Acceptance of us: But though we cannot expect from God his Acceptance of so weak and imperfect a Service, for what it is in itself, yet we may depend upon his Acceptance of it for the Merits of his only Son, when it is the best we can give him in our present fallen State: for our blessed Saviour has, by the greatness of his Sufferings, atoned for all the Defects and Failures of our Faith and Obedience, upon our sincere Repentance; and by the Perfection of his Righteousness, has merited the Acceptance of the imperfect Righteousness of all those who desire and labour after a perfect Righteousness of their own: So that what they fall short of, he will supply them with, and make good out of his Fulness what is wanting in them. This is what we must all trust to, what we must all depend upon, after we have done all that we can in God's Service; for it is this alone that can recommend us to God, and procure our Acceptance with him.

And

14. *A Regular Method of*

And thus I have shewn you wherein the Service of God consists.

1. In a hearty Belief of the Principles of Religion.

2. In a conscientious Practice of the Duties of it.

3. In an humble Dependence upon Christ's Merits for the divine Acceptance of this our Service.

I shall now proceed to the next Thing:

II. And press upon you the Obligation which lies upon the Heads and Governors of Families, to promote this Service amongst their Children and Servants.

There are many Obligations to this Duty, but I shall at this time insist only upon two,

1. The one, from the Authority which you have over your Families.

2. The other, from the Account which you must one Day make for them.

1st, You are obliged to promote the Service of God in your Families from the

the Authority which you have over them.

All the Authority which you have over your Families you have from God; for he is the great Source or Fountain from whence all Authority is derived. And should you not employ this Authority in his Service from whom you received it? For is not this the End for which it was given you; to promote his Service in the World by it? The great End of our Creation, is the Service of God; for we were made to serve him in this World, that we might be happy, for ever happy with him in the next World. And have you Families under your Care and Charge? and are you intrusted with an Authority over them? And should you not then do all that you can to oblige them to answer the End of their Beings, and to bring them up in that Service for which they were made? This surely is an Obligation which lies upon you, from that natural Relation which you bear to them. But you are further obliged to it by your very Baptism; for there you were consecrated to the Service of God, and obliged to make use of

of all the Means which he should at any Time put into your Hands for the promoting that Service. And what an excellent Means would that Authority which he has given you over your Families be for this Purpose, if it were duly made use of by you? For this would tend very much to train up your Children and Servants in their several Duties, and to bring them to glorify God here, and to be glorified by him hereafter. And can you neglect such an Opportunity, without being unfaithful to that Service which you have all taken upon yourselves in your Baptism? But how little is this considered in the World by the Heads of Families! But how seldom do they make use of their Authority for the promoting the Glory and Service of God in them, and the Salvation of the Souls of those under their Care and Charge? They are, for the most Part, strict enough in requiring the Service of themselves; for they will take Care to see their own Business done by them. - But they are apt, too apt, God knows, to forget that both they themselves, and those under them, have another

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other Master to serve, and that it is
 their Duty to look to his Service in
 their Families, as well as to their own :
 yet you should all be just to God's Con-
 cerns as well as to your own, and see
 them served, so far as you can, as well
 as yourselves. And then you might
 expect the greater Blessing from him
 upon their Service of you. And this
 Blessing, were there no other, will be
 an abundant Recompence for all the
 Time and Pains it will cost you. This
 has been the great Study and Business
 of religious Persons in all Ages, to pro-
 mote the Service of God in their Fami-
 lies: for they did not think it enough
 to serve God themselves, but they took
 all the Care they could that he might
 be also served by all those who were
 under them. And indeed, that Person
 who does in good earnest serve God
 himself, will do all that he can to make
 them served in his Family too; because
 he must know that to be no small Part
 of the Service which he owes him.
 This is one of the greatest Characters
 which is left upon record of *Abraham*,
 the Father of the Faithful, that he was
 a Person that would take the best Care
 he

he could that his Children and his S
 vants after him should live in the F
 and Service of the Lord; *Gen. xviii.*
 " I know him, saith God, that he w
 " command his Children and his Hou
 " hold, that they shall keep the Way
 " the LORD, to do Justice and Jud
 " ment." And the brave Resolution
Josbua in the Text, is a lasting Mon
 ment of the Greatness of his Faith and
 Piety; for he declares, that though
 the People of *Israel* should revolt, or fa
 off from the Service of God, yet "
 " and his House would still go on
 " serve the LORD." And it was the
 lemn Vow and Profession which *David*
 the Man after God's own Heart, made
 in a public Manner, that he would have
 a sober and religious Family. " I w
 " walk in my House, saith he, with
 " perfect Heart. Mine Eyes shall b
 " upon the Faithful in the Land, tha
 " they may dwell with me: He tha
 " walketh in a perfect Way, he sha
 " serve me. He that worketh Decei
 " shall not dwell within my House: H
 " that telleth Lies shall not tarry in m
 " Sight." *Psal. ci. 2, 6, 7.* And if thes
 excellent Persons thought themselve
 obliged

is S obliged to take upon them the Care
he F of seeing God served in their very great
iii. and numerous Families; how much
he w more should you think yourselves oblig-
Hon ed to do it in your small ones, where it
Way so much easier to be done by you?

Jud 2dly, Another Obligation which lies
tion upon you to promote the Service of
Mon God in your Families, is from that Ac-
h a count which you must one Day make
gh or them. The Souls of all the Mem-
or fa bers of the Family are under the Care
“ and Charge of the Head of it; for Fa-
on milies are made up of rational Crea-
e tures, who have Souls as well as Bo-
vies to be taken Care of and provided
nac for; and the Governors of them should
hav make the greatest Care of, and make the
wi chiefest Provision for, their Souls; be-
th cause these are the principal Parts of
l b their Charge. And if any of these
tha Souls miscarry through their Neglect,
ha they must one Day answer for them:
na For as God says to the careless Watch-
ce man, *Ezek. iii. 18.* That if any Soul
H perish by his Negligence, “that Soul shall
m be required at his Hands.” So it will
ef be required of all Heads of Families, who
ve are with all Heads of Families, who
ed have the Office of Watchmen intrusted

to

to them by God over their Children and Servants. This is a terrible Consideration, and should make you all very careful to do all your Parts, what belongs to you in your several Families, that the Loss of none of the Souls of them may be charged upon you at the last and dreadful Day; for every one of us will find it enough for him to answer for his own personal Sins, and we should all take Care, all possible Care, not to have the Sins of others to answer for too; for that will make a great and sad Addition to our Account. Now the Way and the only Way for you to prevent this, is by a regular and religious Government of your Families: For if you make use of the most likely Means you can for the bringing up your Children and Servants in the Fear and Service of God, and do pray to him for his Blessing upon those Means; you have done your Part, what belongs to you, and shall deliver your own Souls by it, whatever Effect it may have upon those under your Care and Charge. And this surely you can do: and this, without doubt, you ought to do. And this would tend very much to keep up a great

great Sense of Religion in your Families,
and to make all Persons in them truly
religious: but if it should fail in any of
them, as possibly it may very often,
through the great Corruption of human
Nature, it would leave the Guilt whol-
ly upon themselves, and they alone must
answer for it.

And thus have I pressed upon you the
Obligation which lies upon all Heads
and Governors of Families, to promote,
so far as they can, the Service of God
amongst their Children and Servants,
both from

The Authority which they have over
them. And

The Account which they must one
Day make for them.

I shall now proceed to the *Third*
Thing propounded; which was,

III. To prescribe you a Method for
the more effectual promoting this
Service in your Families.

And it is this:

1. By giving them good Instructions.
2. By setting them good Examples.
3. By praying daily with them in
your Families.

4. By

4. By carrying with you so many of them as you can at all Times, but especially on the Lord's Day, to the religious Assemblies of the Church of *England*.

5. And lastly, by keeping up at all Times a strict and impartial Discipline amongst them in your own Houses.

1st, If you would promote the Service of God in your Families, you must give them good Instructions. We neither will, nor indeed ever can serve God unless we know how to serve him, and why we should do so: But this we cannot know without Instruction; for we came into the World in a State of mere Ignorance, and must always continue in it, unless we be helped out of it by the Instruction of others. For we are made by our great Creator only capable of knowing his most holy Will, and then, but not till then, of doing it: But Knowledge itself must be attained by degrees, and that by the Instruction of others, and our own Observation and Improvement. Now the Knowledge of the Service of God, consists in the Knowledge of the Principles and Duties of Religion: for the Principles of Religion contain the Reason and Motives of our serv-

God; and the Duties of it, the Mat-
 and Expressions of that Service. And
 Knowledge you should instil early
 to your Families, by teaching them
 the Creed and the *Ten Commandments*;
 the Creed is a Summary of the Prin-
 ciples of Religion; and the Ten Com-
 mandments are an Abridgement of the
 Duties of it: And you should shew
 them how unable they are to believe and
 do these Things of themselves, with-
 out God's Help; and learn them to call
 on him for his Grace in the *Lord's*
Prayer, and such other Prayers as they
 are capable of learning. And you should
 convince them how greatly they are
 obliged to do all this, by those solemn
 Promises which were made for them
 at their Baptism, and from those migh-
 ty Advantages which they will receive
 by it. And you should improve them
 in this Knowledge from the Holy Scrip-
 tures, some plain *Exposition of the Church*
Catechism, the *Christian Monitor*, and
 such other good Books, as blessed be
 God, this Nation abounds with; till
 you have prepared them for the taking
 upon themselves their Baptismal Co-
 venant, at their Confirmation by the
 Bishop;

Bishop; and for the renewing of it the other Sacrament, the Sacrament the Lord's Supper. And you should then leave off, but still go on, whilst they are under your Care and Charge, with your Instructions of them from *Whole Duty of Man*; the *Measures of Christian Obedience*; the *Practical Believer*; the *Companion for the Festivals and Fasts of the Church*; and such other excellent Books; for we must be always growing in the Knowledge of God and his Service. These are, in short, the good Instructions which you must give your Families. And methinks every one of you should see the great Necessity of them, because it is so very plain and evident: For can you think yourself obliged to provide wholesome Food for the Bodies of your Children and Servants; and do not you think yourself much more obliged to give good Instructions to their Souls? For are their Souls infinitely the better Part of them? And will not their Souls as certainly perish without Instruction, as their Bodies will die without Food? Is it not a much greater Cruelty to neglect the Souls of those who are un-

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er Care and Charge to be lost, for want
doing what we can to save them, than
suffer their Bodies to be starved,
want of doing what we are able
relieve them? For do what you can,
their Bodies must die, and that in a short
time too, but you may perhaps save
their Souls for ever.

1. If you would promote the Service
of God in your Families, you must
take Care to enforce your Instructions
with good Examples. We find by sad
experience, that young People act very
much by Imitation, and are a great
deal more apt to do what they see others,
and especially those above them, do,
than what they hear them say; for they
are governed much more by Sense than
Reason. And in this Way you
should teach your Families, by becom-
ing good Examples to them, and setting
them a Pattern in your own Lives, of
what you would have them to follow in
their; for this would add a great deal
of Weight to your Instructions of them,
and make them sink much the deeper
into them. But if you shall teach them
One Thing by your Words, and another
by your Actions, you will undo much

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more

more by the one, than you will ever be able to do by the other; for they will be much more ready to follow the bad Example, than the good Instruction, because the good Instruction will go against the Grain of a corrupt Nature, and the bad Example will strike in with the vicious Inclination of it: And when Example and Inclination both move the same Way, there are very few can stand before them, but they bear down almost all along with them. And this is one great Reason of that general Corruption which is amongst us, that though we abound with good Instructions, yet we have very few good Examples; and the Badness of the Examples prevails much more than the Goodness of the Instructions. How greatly then does it concern every one of you, to set no ill Examples of any Kind to your Families, because they will be so apt to follow them: And if they do, though it will not justify them, yet it will condemn you, and add very much to your Guilt here, and Punishment hereafter, for we shall most certainly answer for all the Sins which we have brought others into by our bad Examples, unless

els we do all that we can by our good Examples, for the future, to bring them off again from those Sins. It is too much to go to Hell ourselfes, but to carry our Families along with us thither, will sink us so much the deeper into that Place of Torment, and increase upon us so much the more the Miseries of it. But I hope better Things of you, that you will not only instruct your Families by your Words, in the Service of God, but do what you can by your good Examples to bring them to serve him, that both you and they may be for ever happy with him.

3. If you would promote the Service of God in your Families, you must keep up daily public Prayers in them. A Family is a little Society united together under one Head: And they have some common Blessings to ask a Supply of, some common Dangers to beg a Deliverance from, and some common Mercies to give Thanks for: And the Governor of it should call them together at least twice a Day, in the Morning and Evening, and by himself, or some other Person, offer up their Petitions for what they want, and their

Thanksgivings for what they enjoy that so they may the better succeed in whatsoever Business they set about, and be the more safe in all the Dangers they are exposed to; for all our Success depends upon God's Blessing, and all our Safety is owing to his Protection. And the most likely and effectual Way for us to obtain this Blessing and Protection for ourselves, and for those under our Care and Charge, is, frequently and devoutly to join with them in the same common Prayers for them. But how little is this necessary Course made use of amongst us? For how few Families are there which have this Duty performed in them? But sure this is a very great Neglect; for Prayer is not only the principal Part of the Divine Service, but a necessary Part too, both to engage us, and to enable us to perform all the other Parts of it: So that where this is omitted, it is not to be thought that the rest should be performed. This Duty was formerly much more generally observed in this Kingdom: But upon a wild and enthusiastic Abuse of it by some, it grew into a general Disuse and Neglect by others, and is now almost lost; to the

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great Scandal of Religion, and visible De-
ficiency of true Christian Piety and Devo-
tion. And I heartily wish this good
Practice were in a regular Way
again revived with us; for it would keep
up some Face of Religion, and, I hope,
a greater Sense of it too, amongst us:
Whereas at present, we have little be-
sides the keeping the Lord's Day to shew
for it. And this brings me to the next
thing.

4. If you would promote the Service
of God in your Families, you must
carry with you so many of them as you
can at all Times, but especially on the
Lord's Day, to the religious Assemblies
of the Church of *England*. God has
united us together by a holy Covenant
in a holy Society, the Church; and has
set apart one Day in the Week for us
to meet together in the religious Assem-
blies of it, for his Worship and Service.
And all you who are Heads of Families
should see him thus worshipped and
served on this Day, by all those who are
under your Care and Charge: For can
we look to our own Service on the
Week-Days, and take no Care of God's
Service on the Lord's Day? This would

shew a much greater Concern in us for this present World than for that which is to come; for if we were as much concerned for the next World, as we are for this, we should be as careful of God's Service as we are of our own, and be strict in bringing our Families to his Worship on this Day, as we are in setting them to our own Business on the other Days. And you should not only carry your Children and Servants to the religious Assemblies, but also observe, as far as you can, their Behaviour in them, and take some Account afterwards of the Improvement which they make of themselves by them. For it is not enough for their Persons to be there, but they must, so far as they are capable of it, reverently and devoutly join in all the Parts of the divine Worship and Service, that it may become a Means of their continual growing more and more in Knowledge and Grace, as they grow in Age and Years. But,

5. And lastly, If you would promote the Service of God in your Families you must at all Times keep up a strict and impartial Discipline in them. We all of us feel the mighty Power of Sense,

and

and the great Weakness of Reason in our first Years; for we are born into the World with Sense, but Reason grows up with us by Degrees, and those very slow ones too; and it is some Time before we come to have so much of it, as is sufficient to govern ourselves by. And therefore our wise Creator has placed us for that Time wholly under the Authority of others, that their Reason may supply to us the Want of our own, and guide us when we cannot guide ourselves. But young People are more apt to follow their own corrupt Inclinations, than the best Reason of others; because they much better feel the Impressions of Sense, than understand the Force of Reason. And there is a great deal of Care and Prudence required to keep them under Government. The best Method I can think of, is to deal with them in their own Way, by sensible Things, to train them up to Obedience, and their Duty, by present temporal Rewards and Punishments; because they are capable as yet of none, or very small Impressions, from future and eternal ones. Begin then with Kindnesses and Encouragements,

ments, and try what this will do w
them; for some Tempers are easi
wrought upon by this Way, and this do
carry them to their Duty upon the b
and most lasting Principle, a Princip
of Love. But where this Way w
not do, you must betake yourselves
the other, and force them to their Du
ty, by such Reproofs and Correction
as are suitable to their Age and Di
positions: Endeavour at the same Time
so far as you can, to make them sens
ble, that it is pure Necessity puts yo
upon this harsher Course with them
because a milder one will do no good
upon them. And the earlier you do
this, so much the better; for a bad
Temper is much easier altered before
it be grown up into a wretched Ob
stinacy and Wilfulness, and our Faults
are much sooner amended at first, than
when they are settled into vicious Ha
bits and Customs: A little Correction
in Time will save a great deal after
wards; for it is but breaking the Hu
mour before it be grown too stubborn
and headstrong, and the Work is done.
And this may be done with a little
Prudence and Resolution. And when
it

is done, Obedience and Submission
then become very easy ever after.
How many are there, who might have
been very useful Persons in the World,
if a stricter Hand had been kept over
them in their Youth? But the Reins
were left loose so long, that it became
late to recover and take them up:
that the truest Expression of Love
to young People, is to train them up to
the Service of God betimes, by a strict
and impartial Discipline. And when
kindnesses and Encouragements will
not do, to make use of Reproofs, and
corrections; for this is most for their
good, and may save them from a great
deal of Sin and Folly and Trouble in
this World, and from the more dread-
ful Miseries of that World which is to
come. I shall conclude this with that
Observation of the wise Man, *Prov. xiii.*
“He that spares his Rod, hateth
his Son: but he that loveth him,
chasteneth him betimes.”
And thus I have prescribed you a
short Method for the more effectual
promoting the Service of God in your
families: And it is by giving them
good Instructions, setting them good

Examples, praying with them daily your Families; carrying with you many of them as you can constant on the Lord's Day, to the religious Assemblies of the Church of *England* and lastly, by keeping up at all Times a strict and impartial Discipline among them in your own Houses.

IV. I shall now proceed to the next Thing; which is, *Fourth* and lastly To set before you the many great Advantages which will follow from such a Care of the Service of God in your Families; and these are such as respect either,

First, The Public: Or,
Secondly, Yourself: Or,
Thirdly, Your Children and Servants themselves,

First, A conscientious Care of the Service of God in your Families, will be no small Advantage to the Public. Which consisting of two great Societies, the Church and the State, this will be no small Advantage to both; for Families

Families are the Seeds and Nurseries of both Church and State.

1st, A conscientious Care of the Service of God in your Families, will be no small Advantage to the Church, by fixing them upon good and lasting Principles to her Communion. What is it that makes People so very loose and unsettled in the Communion of the best Church in the World, the Church of *England*, but their being sent out by their Parents into the World, without any true Christian Principles to fix and settle them? For what should secure them from going over to the Wrong, who never were thoroughly instructed in the Right? They are ready to become a Prey to every Body, and easy to be carried off to every Thing. — They are like a Ship put to Sea without Ballast; “tossed to and fro, and carried about with every Wind of Doctrine.” But were they rightly principled in their Youth, this would be a likely Means to fix them in their riper Years: For when Persons do at first set out in the right Way upon good Principles, they do for the most Part go on in it: And if they should by Weakness

and Temptation be unhappily drawn off from it, they will be the more easily recovered and brought back again into it. But when they have no Principles to stop them, they commonly run from one thing to another, till they lose every thing, and become at last past all Hopes of Recovery.

2dly, A conscientious Care of the Service of God in your Families, will be no small Advantage to the State; by making them loyal and faithful to their King, and just and charitable to their Fellow-Subjects. The Happiness of any State depends very much upon the good Principles and Practices of the Members of it: For by the conscientious Discharge of their several Duties, to their Prince and to each other, they lay the best Foundation of Peace and Unity among themselves, and do the most effectually recommend themselves to the Care and Protection of the divine Providence, which is always their greatest Security. Now the Way to make People truly loyal to their Prince, and just and charitable to their Fellow-Subjects, is to begin early with them, and to instil betimes into them the

the true Principles of Loyalty, Justice, and Charity, that they may be carried to the Practice of these Duties, more from a Principle of Religion and Conscience, than from any worldly Motives or Considerations; for then they will not be so apt to fall off from these Duties afterwards, in Times of Temptation and Trial, but will be well-disposed to do their Duty in all Cases; as well when it is against, as when it is for their present Ease and Interest.

Secondly, A conscientious Care of the Service of God in your Families, will be no small Advantage to yourselves.

1st, by giving you the present Reward of it in this World, in the greater Obedience and Dutifulness of your Children, and the greater Fidelity and Diligence of your Servants.

One of the greatest temporal Blessings to Parents, is the Dutifulness of their Children; for very much of the Comfort of their Lives does depend upon it. Now the most effectual Way to make your Children dutiful to you,
is

is to bring them up in the Fear of God and under an awful Sense of their Duty to him. All other Motives will often fail, but this will always hold. Fear or Interest may oblige Children to be dutiful to their Parents at some Times and in some Cases: But it is Religion alone can make them constantly and entirely so.

And then as to your Servants: A great deal of the Success of your worldly Business depends upon the Fidelity and Diligence of these; for if they prove false and negligent, I do not see how your worldly Affairs should greatly prosper and thrive; because no Master can be always with his Servants, and see every Thing done himself, but many Things must be left to their Care and Management. Now the best Way that I know of to make your Servants faithful, and diligent in your own Business, is to keep them strictly to the Service of God; for if you can once bring them to serve God truly, they will serve you faithfully; because they will then know that it is one Part of
the

the Service of God, for Servants to be faithful and diligent in the Service of their Masters; for this is what the Apostle expressly exhorts them to; *Eph.* vi. 5, 6, 7. "Servants, be obedient to them that are your Masters according to the Flesh, with Fear and Trembling; in Singleness of your Heart, as unto Christ. Not with Eye-service, as Men-pleasers, but as the Servants of Christ, doing the Will of God from the Heart; with good Will doing Service as to the Lord and not to Men. Knowing that whatsoever good Things any Man doth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free."

3. A conscientious Care of the Service of God in your Families, will be no small Advantage to yourselves, by intitling you to a greater Reward in another World. To get to Heaven yourselves will be an unspeakable Happiness; but to bring your Families thither too, will be an inexpressible Addition to that Happiness; for it will not only fill you with a greater Degree of Joy and Delight in your own Souls, to see the blessed Fruits of your Labours in God's Service, in the everlast-

ing Glory and Happiness of your Children and Servants: But it will also procure for you a greater Degree of Glory and Happiness from God himself; for the Prophet *Daniel* tells us, chap. xii. 3. that "they that be Wise," or Teachers of others, "shall shine as the Brightness of the Firmament; and they that turn many unto Righteousness, as the Stars for ever and ever."

Third, and lastly. A conscientious Care of the Service of God in your Families, will be no small Advantage to your Children and Servants themselves.

1. By disposing them to Goodness here.

2. By preparing them for Happiness hereafter.

1st, By disposing them to Goodness here. When young People are left to themselves, it is no wonder that they become very loose and wicked; for they have a corrupt Nature within, to incline them to that which is ill; and a tempt-

Child, a tempting World and a tempting Devil
throughout, to allure and solicit them to
And what should restrain them
from following their own Inclinations,
and yielding to the Temptations of
Satan, who have neither Reason enough
of their own to see the Danger of it, nor
the Instructions and Examples of those
above them, to set it before them, and
to teach them better? And if once
they are entered into the Ways of Sin,
they will go on a great Pace in those
Ways, and it will be very hard ever
to recover them; for they will soon get
the Custom of sinning, and come by de-
grees to sin naturally and of course.
And vicious Habits are very stubborn
things, and it requires a more than
ordinary Grace and Labour to break
bad Customs, and to change a sinful
course of Life into a good one. And
this is the great Reason why so very
few bad Persons ever become good, be-
cause they do not pray and labour enough
to make themselves so. But a great
deal of this Hazard and Trouble might
be saved, if there was that religious and
prudent Care taken of them in their
young

young and tender Years which ought to be; for were they brought up in the Fear and Service of God, they would in time grow in love with Religion and the Duties of it would at length become easy and pleasant to them. And when once we come to take a Delight in Goodness, there will be no great Trouble in going on in it, nor Danger of falling off from it: for what we delight ourselves in, we easily keep ourselves to, and readily follow after. The wise Man made the wise Man advise to "train up a Child in the Way he should go, because when he is old he will not depart from it," *Prov. xxii. 6.* A good Education is a mighty Blessing, one of the greatest that I know of in this World for it puts us under the Protection of God's Providence and Grace, and lays a Foundation for the Peace and Comfort of our whole Lives. And we never know the Value of this Blessing till we come to a true Sense of the Sin and Follies of our Youth, and of the miserable Condition into which they have brought us. Be wise therefore in time, ye that are Young, and according

g to the Advice of the wisest of
men, "Remember your Creator in the
Days of your Youth," *Eccles. xii. 1.* For
this will happily prevent that mighty
trouble and Hazard which otherwise you
will infallibly expose yourselves to, and
comfortably insure to yourselves that
Happiness which you came into this
World for, and which you ought, to
the utmost of your Power, to endea-
your after; I mean, the Happiness of
Heaven. For a conscientious Care of
the Service of God in your Families,
will be of great Advantage to both
your Children and Servants; as, by
endeavouring to make them good here, so
also,

2. By preparing them for Happiness
hereafter. This is the great End for
which they were born, and to which
they should be brought, by all the Ways
and Means which are proper for that
Purpose: Now the most effectual Way
and Means is, by training them up in
the Service of God; for Christ has by
the Merits of his Obedience and Suf-
ferings, procured for us, and in his
Gospel promised to us, Heaven, as a
Reward

Reward of this Service. And if
be so happy as to be entered into
Service betimes, we shall probably
on in it; because it will grow ev
Day more and more easy and delig
ful to us, and we shall see more a
more the great Advantages of it. T
makes it an unspeakable Blessing
young Persons to be placed in a sob
and religious Family; for such a F
mily is a religious School to them,
instruct them in the Way to Heave
and to guide them in it. And you th
are Young, should be truly sensible
this Blessing, when you enjoy it; an
express your Thankfulness for it, b
improving yourselves by it. And whe
you want it, you should long for i
and endeavour after it whensoever yo
are at Liberty to dispose of yourselv
in the World; for though this will la
some Restraint upon you, and Retrain
will be uneasy to you at first, yet i
will in Time grow easier and easier
and you will at last see the mighty Be
nefit of it, and bless that good Provi
dence which brought you under it.—
For what is this Restraint? It is only
a keep-

keeping you from destroying yourselves. And is such a Liberty to be offered by you, as will most certainly ruin you, and make you miserable both now and for ever? Do not then any longer deceive yourselves, but be assured, that the Service of God is the best and most perfect Freedom; for it will make you quiet and easy here, and happy, for ever happy, hereafter.

And thus I have gone through what I proposed from the Words of my Text, and shewn you,

I. Wherein the Service of God does consist.

II. The Obligation which lies upon you, who are Heads and Governors of Families, to promote this Service amongst your Children and Servants.

III. The proper Method for the effectual promoting this Service in your Families.

IV, and lastly, The many great Advantages which will follow from such a Service of the Service of God.

And

And now what remains for me to more, than to pray to God to give all Grace so to serve him yourself and to see him served by your Family that you may receive the Reward it in the greater Dutifulness and Obedience of your Children, and Fidelity and Diligence of your Servants in this World, and the everlasting Salvation of your own Souls, and the Souls of all those under your Care and Charge in that World which is to come, through Jesus Christ our Lord? To whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be all Honour and Glory, Praise and Thanksgiving, Love and Obedience, ever and ever, *Amen*.



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